

4-H ADULT VOLUNTEER

Online Learning Preferences

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Data collected in 2018

Do today's 4-H adult volunteers prefer to access educational training online? Which online learning formats do they prefer? How do their preferences influence our methods in design and development?

An online survey was distributed by email to a sample of Minnesota 4-H adult volunteers who attended one or more trainings, online and/or in-person, within 18 months.

Following the survey, two focus groups were conducted through a web-based seminar to provide further insight into the survey findings. The focus group participants were also selected because they participated in an online or in-person training within 18 months.

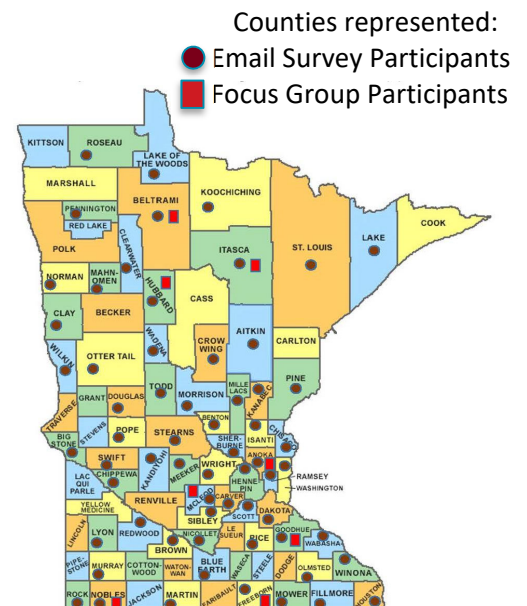
This report outlines the findings from the survey and the focus group, followed by implications for training 4-H volunteers in online settings.

OVERALL FINDINGS

Demographics

Email Survey. Survey demographics are consistent with Minnesota statewide 4-H volunteer demographics. A total of **148 adult volunteers** (14% return rate) completed the online survey. The majority of the respondents are **female (74%)** and primarily indicate birth years of 1960's (28%) and 1970's (22%). They are primarily **white (91%)** and most indicate they have **1-5 years (43%)** or **6-10 years (23%)** of experience as a 4-H volunteer.

Focus Group. The web-based seminar focus group had **16 participants**, representing **8 counties** throughout the state. The majority are **female (80%)** and have **6-15 years (70%)** of experience.



Survey & Focus Group Results

Which device do volunteers want to use when accessing online training?

- **Very likely** to use a **computer (74%)** to access online learning opportunities

Volunteers indicate that less than half will use a smartphone (44%) or Tablet (25%)

How do volunteers search for resources that support their programming with youth?

- **Very likely** to search the **MN 4-H Website (62%)** and a **Search Engine (51%)** to find online resources/tools

Volunteers are **somewhat likely** to:

- Utilize online discussion boards (45%)
- Search YouTube (45%)
- Listen to a podcast (41%)
- Subscribe to an email list serve (36%)

How do volunteers want to participate in training?

- **Very much like** to learn by **Reading a Newsletter (58%)** and **Watching a Video (52%)**

Volunteers **somewhat like** to:

- Participate in a webinar (48%)
- Listen to a podcast (45%)

Over half of volunteers would **not like** to learn by reading a Blog (52%)

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Use Computer for Training:

100% of Focus Group participants indicate they would use a computer to access online training. Why? Larger screen size and comfort level with learning on that device is high.

Search 4-H Sites:

Focus Group participants usually search 4-H sites* because using a “credible source” for 4-H work is important. This is in contrast to searches for personal hobbies and interests, where they are more likely to read books, ask a friend or use general online searching tools.

*County, MN, other states, Extension in general & a 4-H Facebook group

Find Resources in Newsletter:

Volunteers would like links to educational resources and training videos in newsletters.

Increase Experience Level with Online Learning

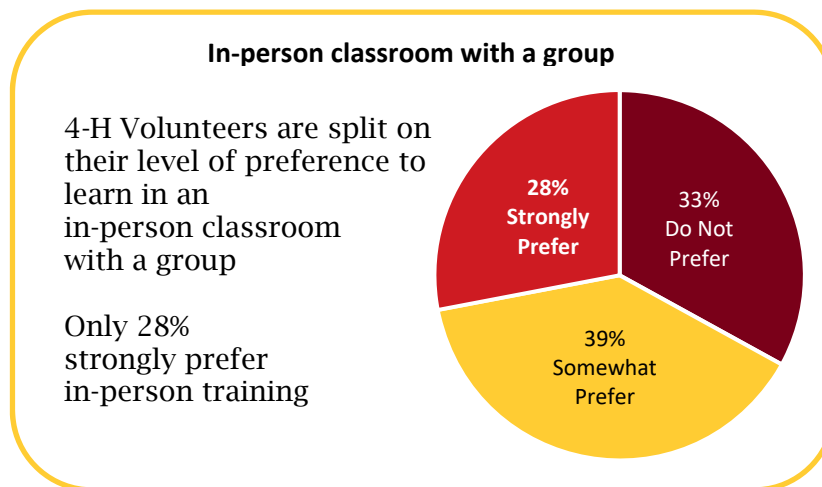
Volunteers report increased interest and an increase in comfort level of online trainings/meetings when web-based opportunities are introduced and encouraged.

Which learning formats would 4-H Volunteers prefer to learn?

- **Strongly prefer** to be in an **online self-study** by themselves and on their own time (70%) and **reading printed material on their own time** (48%)

Volunteers indicate they **somewhat prefer** to complete training:

- In an online self-study, with an opportunity to read and write on discussion forums with others (52%)
- In an online classroom or webinar, while interacting with others (43%)



VOLUNTEER SUGGESTIONS FOR ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES

Targeted training:

"Training on specific topics with "How-To" examples"

Practical applications:

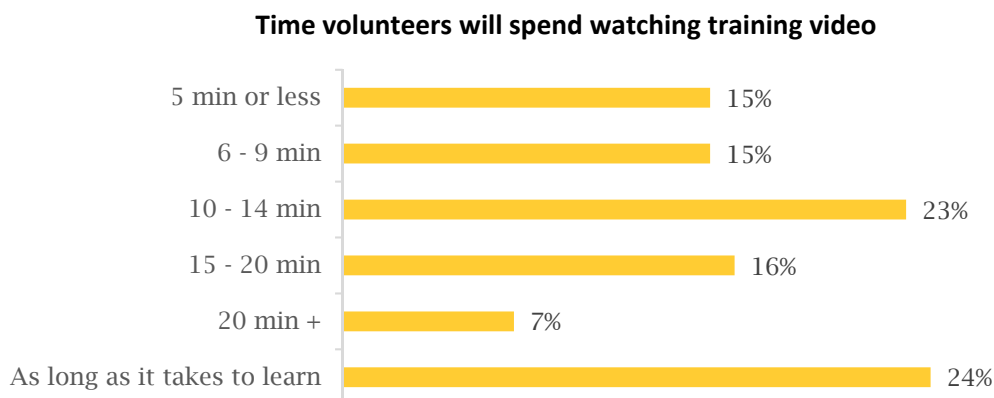
"Share ideas that others have implemented and were successful...give real life examples."

Opportunities to share ideas / learn from others:

"I would appreciate more live webinars with volunteers doing similar roles across several counties or the state. It would be fun to share ideas in this way, I think."

How long will volunteers watch an online video to increase their skills as a 4-H Volunteer?

- 70% of participants indicate they will **watch a training video 10+ minutes**

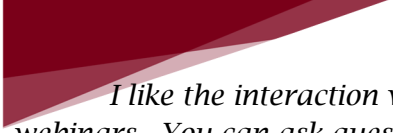


Which day and time would volunteers prefer to participate in a training webinar (*1 hour or less*)?

→ **Prefer weekday evenings (44%) on Wednesday (32%), Monday (25%) and Tuesday (23%)**

Volunteers indicate a **low preference** for the following days.

- Lunch hour, Monday – Friday
- Weekend, Saturday (all times)
- Weekend, Sunday (all times)

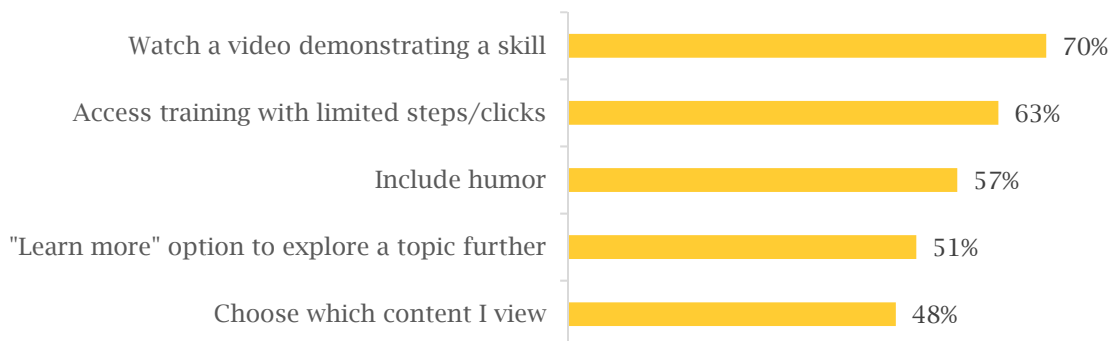


I like the interaction with webinars. You can ask questions immediately as you are thinking of them and usually get a response.

Which online learning tools do volunteers prefer?

→ **Strongly prefer to watch a video that demonstrates the skill (70%).**

Online Learning Tools Strongly Preferred by Volunteers



Volunteers **somewhat prefer** to:

- Hear a narrator (49%)
- Interact with the presentation by pushing buttons to get more information (46%)
- View the information without signing in with user name and password (46%)

IMPLICATIONS

Develop Training in Multiple Learning Formats

- Offer required training in multiple formats, including both in-person and online options to reach more volunteer learning preferences. This will likely increase the number of volunteers who complete training.

Note: 4-H volunteers who indicate a strong preference for in-person training tend to express strong opinions against online learning options.

- Introduce volunteers to online learning and meeting options. Comfort levels will increase after experiencing new forms of learning and volunteers will appreciate the travel and time savings.
- Create video blogs and/or audiocasts to add to communication tools and educational plans with volunteers.
- Develop online learning based on volunteer's preference to access and watch the training on a computer screen and in a self-study format with consideration for increased mobile device use in the future.

Provide Easy Access to Resources

- Make learning resources searchable and easy to find. 4-H volunteers want to search for program resources from the University, but they won't take a lot of time to look for it.

Offer Targeted Training

- Have on-demand online video's that demonstrate specific skills. Volunteers aren't concerned about a specific video length and will watch as long as it takes to learn content or develop a new skill.
- Use program communication tools (i.e. newsletters) to share educational information and resources. Volunteers consider information they receive from those tools program priorities.

Give Opportunities to Share Ideas & Learn From Others

- Continue to offer face-to-face opportunities for volunteers to network and build relationships. Then, add online options for continued sharing and learning with others through distance learning tools, such as web-based seminars, social media and email groups.

Send Questions or comments about this report and survey results to:

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